# The Magic Ring:

: Set with Pictures by R: André :

London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge:
New York: E: & J: B: Young & Co:

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Sounds of the chase had died away
Far through the sombre wood;
Alone beside his weary steed
A youthful monarch stood.

When, lo! from out the brushwood near
A milk white rabbit sprang,
Chased by his hound; and to the King
For aid and shelter ran.

He saved it from the eager hound —
He bore it to his home —
He fed it — let it rest awhile —
Then left it free to roam.

That night beside the monarch's couch
A Lily-lady stood;
And said, "O King, in rabbit guise,
You saved me in the wood."

"As guerdon for so kind a deed
This precious gift I bring,
A talisman to be your guide,
A magic ruby ring."

"Wear it; and if in evil hour
From virtue's path you stray,

A warning star will call you back
Into the better way."

She vanished; and the King awhile
The magic circlet wore,
Yet with impatience and contempt
Its frequent warnings bore.

Time passed — From toil of fruitless chase
King Ahmèd came one day,
And round his feet his little dog
Gambolled in joyous play.

Impatiently he threw it off —
It bounded back again —

In wrath he raised his hunting spear
And poor Fidèle was slain!

And then the King with cruel stab
Drew blood — a warning sent
In vain to curb his temper's haste,
And bid the man repent.

The pain increased King Ahmed's wrath
Roused all his wicked pride:
He tore the fairy favour off,
And cast the gem aside.

No check thenceforward has his will
Free from the magic ring,
He ruled his people savagely,
A tyrant not a King.

He sent them chained to distant mines;
He wore them out with toil;
Nor age nor infancy escaped
Hard labour on the soil.

Once more the Lily-lady came
And frowning sternly said,
"A life unworthy of a man,
Tyrant! by thee is led."

"Cruel and savage! take the shape
That for thy soul is meet!"
A gaunt wolf, as the Fairy spake,
Lay crouching at her feet.

The King had vanished from his realm;
How? no one could explain—

They thought (when they beheld the wolf)
The Monarch had been slain.

To the menagerie they drag
The dumb and struggling King,
And into a dark horrid den
The wolf-like man they fling.

And there henceforward he must dwell;
His howls and fury vain—
They only bring the keeper's lash,
Or heavy galling chain.

And where he lies, he hears all day
The peoples shout of glee,

"The Tyrant's gone! rejoice! rejoice!
Once more the land is free."

The Keeper was a cruel man
Who badly used his power,
And causelessly upon his beasts
Oft savage blows would shower.

But, in his wolf disguise, the King
A solemn lesson learns,
And to atone for his past crimes
With helpless anguish yearns.

One day the Tiger, much provoked,
Upon the Keeper springs,
And to the earth with savage roar
His tyrant master flings.

The victim thinks his fate is sealed;
But unhoped aid is nigh—
He sees the Wolf with sudden bound
Upon the Tiger fly.

The man is saved! he gains his feet;
For succour loudly cries;

Men fly to help; the Tiger's seized,
And once more captive lies

The Keeper turns to praise the Wolf:
No Wolf is to be seen—
A stately Lion, King of beasts,
Stands where the Wolf has been.

And while in motionless surprise
The Keeper gazing stood,
The noble beast with thankful heart
Made off to the near wood.

There seated neath a mighty tree,
Upon the mossy ground,
A lovely Lady all in tears
The Kingly Lion found.

In seeming fear the Lady rose
From off her grassy seat;
But, when she saw the lordly beast
Crouch lowly at her feet,

And by his sympathy to show
And meekly offer aid—

She laid her white hand on his mane
And was no more afraid.

She told him how in fear she fled,
All hopeless and alone,
From that false Traitor who usurped
Her father's ancient throne.

By signs he made her mount his back
And (saying he was sent
By Providence to give her aid)
Fearless with him she went.

Attacked by outlaws in the wood,
For her he fought and bled;
And safe the Lily-lady bore
When half her foes were dead.

So sped they for many a league,
Through wild, and wold, and wood,
Until they reached the Monarch's home,
And at the gate they stood.

And then the Lily-lady spoke;
"Resume thy former shape,
Now thou hast learnt that to be good
Is to be truly great."
He rose again a stately Prince,
Once more he was a King —
And on his finger shone again
The Fairy's Magic Ring.

With royal steps once more he trod
His ancient palace home,
And no one dared to ask of him
Where he had pleased to roam.

But with frank smile and princely grace
This strange wild tale he told;
And promised that his future rule
Should not be like the old.

Chromolitho: Emrik & Binger, 15 Holborn Viaduct: London E.C.

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